

[<<Back](#)



State Helps Agencies Distributing A/C Units

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R-Meana Harris

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Gov. Phil Bredesen announced Wednesday the state reimburse community service agencies such as Nashville's Metro Action Commission that provide free air conditioners for elderly, disabled and residents with medical issues.

Bredesen said emergency funds are available to make sure anyone who needs relief receives it.



Tonya Harper

"I think 14 people have died over this from children to elderly. There's no reason for it," said Troy Farmer.

Farmer and hundreds like him are getting heat help from the Metro Action Commission. The agency distributed 400 air conditioners this summer. Last year, it distributed 199 units.

"We really didn't think we was gonna make it another day, you know," said Tonya Harper.

Harper lives in public housing without any air conditioning. Her daughter has asthma.



Harper said she appreciated the assistance and the generosity of individuals and companies that helped provide the free air conditioners.

Sprintz Furniture donated new air conditioners to the Metro Action Commission. The agency also received contributions to buy units through its Summer Cooling Program.



Bredesen offered emergency funds to buy air conditioners and fans to 19 agencies across the state. He said no one should suffer.

"We've contacted them today and told them money is no object if someone needs air conditioners," Bredesen said during a press conference Wednesday. "We have emergency funds for those purposes."

This announcement gives Metro Action Commission a back up plan.

"For the whole state and what it does is gives us additional resources in order to purchase more air conditioners if we need to purchase them," said Metropolitan Action Commission spokeswoman Lisa Gallon.

"It feels like its 200 degrees, you know," said R-Meana Harris. "I'm just in the house because it's so hot. It's terrible, terrible."

For Harris, receiving an air conditioner means she and her three children will be able to sleep for the first time in weeks without sweating and sweltering.

"It's a blessing that you can come to a program that can help you during this period of time," Harris said.

The Summer Cooling Program provides free air conditioners to Davidson County residents that 65 years or older; have a medical condition which could become life-threatening because of the heat; or have a physical disability.

Eligible residents should call the Metropolitan Action Commission at 862-8860, Ext 100.



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